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Alex Newman is one of the John Birch Society's most prolific writers and speakers. He describes himself on Twitter as a ***"journalist/author/educator exposing evildoers"***

https://twitter.com/ALEXNEWMAN_JOU?lang=en

His biographical statement states that:

"Alex Newman is an American journalist and consultant who writes about economics, finance, banking, business, and politics for diverse publications in the United States and abroad. He studied journalism, economics and political science at the University of Florida. In addition to his own consulting firm, Alex has worked in market research, marketing, strategy, research, information gathering and consulting for international companies, non-profit organizations and various political campaigns. He is also the co-author of a book exposing some of the problems with today's public education system."

A more detailed biographical statement is here:

<http://www.republicoftheunitedstates.org/dev/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/2016-05-16%20Alex%20Newman%20Bio.pdf>

Judging from his photo, he appears to be about 30-35 years old which probably explains why he has no real knowledge about JBS history – particularly during its formative years (1959 thru the 1960's).

Newman's Methodology

Apparently, (as will be seen below) Newman just accepts everything which the JBS tells him to believe but he never spends even one nanosecond conducting independent fact-based research.

The purpose of my critique is to address some of the many falsehoods and misrepresentations which Mr. Newman recently published on the Birch Society's *New American* website that pertains to an article published by *The Federalist*.

The Newman article may be seen at the link below – and it contains a link to the original article published in *The Federalist* by David Marcus.

<https://www.thenewamerican.com/culture/history/item/28361-the-federalist-gets-it-really-wrong-on-buckley-and-birch-society>

John Birch Society members are particularly sensitive to any statements, assertions, or whatever they interpret as sinister innuendos regarding accusations of racism or anti-semitism or any other form of bigotry within the John Birch Society.

I have written a separate article (link below) which specifically addresses the issue of racism and the JBS which I encourage readers to review: <https://sites.google.com/site/aboutxr/>

INTRODUCTION

This critique will consist of several chapters that will address specific subjects which Mr. Newman brings up in his rebuttal to the article published by *The Federalist*. Specifically, I will address the following:

Chapter 1A = The JBS Investigations: Efficiency Research Bureau

(A) Mr. Newman recommends an “*investigation*” conducted by Earl Freeman, purportedly under the auspices of the Efficiency Research Bureau of Anaheim California. The ERB was a private investigation firm owned by Russell DeOrto which claimed to conduct a two-month investigation into the JBS in Los Angeles, Orange, and San Bernardino counties

MY METHODOLOGY

Unlike Mr. Newman, I have relied upon the following sources for my information on the ERB “*investigation*”

- FBI-Los Angeles file documents about Efficiency Research Bureau and Earl Freeman
- Sworn court depositions by Earl Freeman and Ramon Long arising from Earl Freeman’s libel lawsuit
- My contacts with the son and daughter of ERB’s owner, Russell DeOrto
- My research during the 1960’s re: ERB/Freeman with local newspaper reporter Dixon Gayer
- Contemporaneous newspaper and magazine articles about the ERB/Freeman “*investigation*”

Indoctrinated JBS members like Mr. Newman rarely perform independent research so they usually just parrot whatever bogus assertions or conclusions which the JBS tells its members to believe. I will devote considerable space to discussing the ERB “*investigation*” because it reveals the fundamental defects which are commonplace in

JBS narratives.

I will let readers decide for themselves who has more credible sources about this subject matter (me or Newman).

Due to space limitations, this first webpage will be devoted entirely to the ERB Report.

New webpages will be created in the future for the following chapters:

Chapter 1B = The JBS Investigations: The 1963 California Senate Subcommittee Report

(B) The California Senate Factfinding Subcommittee on Un-American Activities included a 62-page chapter on the John Birch Society in its 1963 Report. Since the 1960's, Birchers like Mr. Newman have always claimed that the California Report "**exonerated**" the JBS. Mr. Newman even goes so far as to declare that this California Report's "**conclusions were unequivocal**" (which is grossly misleading for reasons which I will explain).

Chapter 2 = Robert Welch on Segregation – and African-American JBS Membership

Alex Newman claims that JBS founder Robert Welch "**was publicly opposing segregation long before he founded the Birch Society in 1958. And that distaste for racism and segregation...was embedded into the fabric of the Society from the start.**"

Mr. Newman does not provide any examples to substantiate how Mr. Welch supposedly was "**publicly opposing segregation**" even before the JBS was founded so I guess Newman just wants us to take his word for that assertion. Newman also refers to the John Birch Society having "**many prominent black members**" – although he does not list any.

Chapter 3 = Alex Newman's Recommendation of Cleon Skousen

Mr. Newman's recommends former FBI Special Agent W. Cleon Skousen's 1963 essay entitled "***The Communist Attack on the John Birch Society***" – which Mr. Newman claims is authoritative because it supposedly refutes the "**rampant smears and lies from communists, globalists, and their useful idiots in the early 1960's.**"

Chapter 4 = Journalistic and Media Ethics

Mr. Newman's pretended interest in "**basic journalistic and media ethics**" is quite touching but insincere. Historically, JBS members and sympathizers have described ALL criticism of the JBS as nothing more than "**smears**" and "**lies**" which (quoting Mr. Newman) originate with "**communists and globalists**".

Chapter 5 = William F. Buckley Jr.

My last chapter will briefly address William Buckley's beliefs regarding white supremacy and black inferiority.

FOOTNOTES:

The numbers which appear within each chapter's text that are bracketed in bold red font- such as **[1]** – refer to footnotes at the end of each chapter.

CHAPTER ONE = LET'S BEGIN WITH THE ERB "INVESTIGATION"

Let's remind ourselves about what Alex Newman has written (quoted below)

"Even in 1963, when Buckley was getting ready to launch his attacks on Welch, the California Senate Fact-Finding Committee released a report about its investigation of The John Birch Society, which was already being smeared by communists and globalists. The investigation's conclusions were unequivocal. *'At any rate, our investigations have disclosed no evidence of anti-Semitism on the part of anyone connected with the John Birch Society in California, and much evidence to the effect that it opposes racism in all forms'*, the investigators wrote, adding that Welch was actively expelling any racists or anti-Semites who managed to get into JBS."

[1]

AND

"In 1962, Congressman John Rousselot (R-Calif.) entered into the *Congressional Record* the conclusions of an investigation conducted by the Efficiency Research Bureau. The investigators found, among other facts, that *'the John Birch Society isn't anti-Semitic, anti-Negro, or anti- any religious group'*, and that, *'they, in fact, have chapters composed entirely of colored membership.'* The document also pointed out that the JBS *'has Jewish members on the national advisory council.'*" **[2]**

THE FRAUDULENT EFFICIENCY RESEARCH BUREAU INVESTIGATION

Let's first introduce the cast of characters for this story—in alpha order:

Dr. William Brashears = John Birch Society member and Fullerton California dentist and real estate developer

Matt Cvetic = John Birch Society member; former FBI informant inside CPUSA

Russell Clarence DeOrto = owner and President of Efficiency Research Bureau (ERB) of Anaheim CA – a private investigation firm in Orange County, California

Earl Freeman aka Noble Earl Freeman = Chief Investigator at ERB

Dr. James Garry = John Birch Society member; Fullerton CA dentist

Robert Geier = Orange County publicist and 1962 Republican candidate for 34th Congressional District. Geier also did work for the JBS.

Ramon V. Long = President of Varec, Inc. of Compton CA – manufacturer of oil company equipment and supplies

William R. Murphy = private individual who supposedly asked Freeman to investigate the John Birch Society

Karl Prussion = John Birch Society endorser and former FBI informant inside CPUSA

The *Santa Ana CA Register* = the largest circulation newspaper in Orange County, CA. *The Register* was one of a chain of JBS-friendly newspapers owned by ultra-conservative Raymond C. Hoiles. *The Register* published major articles on 3/9/62 and 3/13/62 which “revealed” the purported anti-JBS “conspiracy” operating within Orange County as discovered during an “investigation” by Earl Freeman and ERB.

“**The Secret Six**” = Six southern California residents whom Earl Freeman described as part of a “**conspiracy**” to discredit the John Birch Society.

The six persons are:

- Leo J. Corbett, an engineer from Anaheim CA who was interested in right-wing activities in Orange County CA
- Fred Peters (professor at Fullerton Junior College)
- Dr. Kurt Bergel (history professor at Chapman College)
- Walter B. Chaffee (Fullerton CA attorney and former Municipal Court Judge and Chairman of Orange County California Democratic Central Committee)
- Dixon Gayer (journalism professor at Long Beach State College and reporter and columnist for Orange County *Evening News* and Garden Grove *Daily News*) and
- Dr. Don Butka (dentist in Santa Ana CA).

THE BEGINNING...

Our story begins (according to Earl Freeman) during the first week of January 1962 when William R. Murphy (a resident of Orange County) supposedly contacted Freeman to request background information about the John Birch Society. Murphy told Freeman that he was thinking about joining the JBS.

Freeman told FBI-Los Angeles Special Agent Henry F. Alston that his “*investigation*” of the JBS was under the auspices of the private investigation firm, Efficiency Research Bureau (ERB) of Anaheim, and it “encompassed a study and analysis of the Birch Society’s membership, organizational structure and financing in the Southern California area and was completed in early March 1962.” [FBI Los Angeles file 100-59001, serial #609, 3/16/62 memo from Special Agent in Charge of Los Angeles field office to Director J. Edgar Hoover, page 1]

The March 9, 1962 issue of the *Santa Ana CA Register* (Orange County’s largest circulation newspaper) contained an article captioned “***Private Birch Society Investigation Bared***”. In that article, Freeman told the *Register* that he was not at liberty to reveal the name of the client who retained him (and ERB) to conduct his “*investigation*”.

However (quoting from the newspaper article):

“When asked whether the request came from an individual or organization, Freeman answered, ‘It was not an individual and, let’s say that our company handles firms as clients. That’s about as far as I can go.’” [Emphasis on “**firms**” in original article]. Freeman also stated that his client was from “**out of Orange County**”.

The owner of ERB (Russell DeOrto) made some additional comments for the March 9th *Register* article:

- (1) ERB “**almost exclusively deals with commercial firms in checking on employee courtesy, honesty, and salesmanship**” and
- (2) Details regarding Freeman’s “*investigation*” would not be publicly available “**unless the client should so direct us**”.
- (3) DeOrto stated that he had been a private investigator for 18 years following service as a law enforcement officer in San Bernardino County and Freeman had been a former Los Angeles police officer. They formed ERB in December 1960.

NOTE: For reasons which will later become obvious, when I use the word “*investigation*” in connection with Freeman or ERB, I will put the word within quotation marks to signify justifiable skepticism about what actually was done by Freeman. The methods which Freeman employed for discovering the truth about the Birch Society were never revealed, but his findings suggest that Freeman simply got an interview with some JBS official and then reported all that he was told as proven fact.

ENTER.... Leo J. Corbett

On the evening of March 12, 1962, Leo J. Corbett saw a television news report which reported an interview with Freeman and DeOrto about their JBS “*investigation*”. During that interview, Freeman stated that there was a secret six-man group in Orange County whose objective was to destroy anti-Communists.

Leo Corbett then called Dixon Gayer, a local newspaper reporter and columnist, to ask Dixon if he had seen the TV news report. Dixon had not. Corbett suggested to Dixon that Freeman's reference to a "six man" subversive group might have something to do with an earlier meeting that Corbett, Gayer and three other men had with Freeman and DeOrto. There are two versions concerning how this meeting came about.

LEO J. CORBETT CONTACTS EARL FREEMAN

Version #1

According to Freeman's statement to FBI-Los Angeles on March 9th, Mr. Corbett contacted Freeman by telephone during the first week of March 1962 (after Freeman had completed his investigation). At that time, Corbett allegedly declared that he belonged to an un-named local organization, composed of six persons, whose purpose was to develop information against anti-Communists. Corbett then allegedly named the six persons (see list of "Secret Six" above).

Corbett allegedly told Freeman that he wanted to meet with Freeman to share the information which he had compiled that included **"a list of all the JBS members in Orange County"** along with **"confidential files on the leading anti-Communist leaders...which could be used to discredit them."**

According to Freeman, Corbett specifically mentioned derogatory files he had on **"Leon Skousen"** (sic) and **"John Beckner"** (sic). This appears to refer to former FBI Special Agent W. Cleon Skousen and Dr. John R. Lechner. [See: FBI-Los Angeles file 100-59001, serial #612, memo by FBI-Los Angeles Special Agent Henry F. Alston to Special Agent in Charge re: 3/9/62 contact by Earl Freeman.]

Corbett and Freeman agreed to meet to discuss the JBS although the date and time was not decided. Corbett then phoned Dixon Gayer to inform him about his future meeting with Freeman. Gayer expressed interest in attending the meeting as a newspaper reporter as did three other men who were interested in right-wing activities in Orange County (i.e. Butka, Chaffee and Bergel). One other man, a junior college professor, was not able to attend.

These men were later described by Freeman as comprising the "Secret Six" conspiratorial group. The meeting was held at ERB headquarters at 800 S. Brookhurst St., in Anaheim. ERB owner Russell DeOrto also attended. **[Note:** this was the first time that the "Secret Six" group (minus the one who could not attend) had ever been together in any meeting although some of them knew about each other because of their support for a local organization devoted to supporting public schools, i.e. the Orange County Educational Forum.]

The initial meeting at ERB headquarters did not produce much useful information because both sides appeared to be wary of each other. Neither Freeman or DeOrto would disclose the name of the client who

supposedly asked ERB to conduct their JBS “*investigation*”. The meeting ended after about an hour but Dixon Gayer, Russell DeOrto and Leo Corbett went to a coffee shop across the street from ERB to talk further. At that second meeting, DeOrto again stated that he did not know who ERB’s client was.

When the first newspaper articles about a “*Secret Six*” group were published (without naming those six persons), Dixon Gayer phoned DeOrto to inquire if ERB was claiming that Dixon was one of the “*Secret Six*”. DeOrto wouldn’t answer.

Dixon then informed DeOrto that if he was publicly identified, a libel lawsuit was likely because there was no truth to the published story. DeOrto told Dixon that he did not want to discuss this matter on the phone and he suggested that they meet at the bar of the Greenbriar Inn located in Garden Grove for a further discussion. At Greenbriar, DeOrto told Dixon that he didn’t know what was in the Freeman report nor who was going to be named.

Meanwhile, Robert Geier, an Orange County public relations consultant who also was a legislative aide to ultra-conservative and pro-JBS Congressman James B. Utt, had prepared and circulated a press release about a news conference to be held at ERB headquarters on March 12th during which Freeman would discuss his findings.

DeOrto again told Dixon Gayer that he had no advance knowledge regarding the persons who were going to be named nor did he know the name of the client who was going to pay for the investigation. DeOrto stated that he thought Freeman was using his “*investigation*” as a publicity stunt to generate business for ERB. At his March 12th press conference, Freeman presented what he declared were his 14 factual conclusions regarding the JBS. [3]

Version #2

At his request, Walter Chaffee was contacted by two FBI Agents on Monday, March 19, 1962. During that conversation, Chaffee stated that in early March, he saw a newspaper article in the *Anaheim Bulletin* which mentioned that ERB was investigating the JBS. Subsequently, Chaffee learned from Leo Corbett that Corbett had called Earl Freeman to discuss the “*investigation*”. Chaffee told the FBI that according to his information, Freeman suggested that **“he and Corbett should consolidate their information regarding the JBS and feed it to the American Civil Liberties Union.”** [FBI-Los Angeles file 100-59001, serial #622; 3/20/62 memo from Special Agent Henry F. Alston to SAC Los Angeles regarding Alston conversation with Chaffee on 3/19/62.]

Chaffee also told the FBI that the owner of ERB (Russell DeOrto) had fired Earl Freeman and Freeman would take his JBS “*investigation*” with him because DeOrto did not want ERB to be associated with it! Freeman was fired by DeOrto on Thursday, March 15th. [For more

details, see: *"Anti-Anti-Red Prober Fired"* in 3/16/62 *Garden Grove CA Daily News*.]

THE NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

On March 13, 1962, the *Santa Ana Register* published a major front-page article with large headlines about the Freeman press conference as follows:

"REPORTED OPERATING IN ORANGE COUNTY: Secret Group Formed To Smear Anti-Reds; Investigators Report Conspiracy Afoot To Discredit Birchers"

The opening paragraph of this article quoted the following conclusion from the ERB report:

"We find that there is a far worse menace to the security of our nation now operating in these counties than can be charged to the John Birch Society or similar anti-Communist groups."

The article then continued:

"With that terse statement, Efficiency Research Bureau, a private investigating firm of 800 S. Harbor Blvd., Anaheim, Monday afternoon summed up an investigation of the Birch Society. It began January 2. The counties referred to are Orange, San Bernardino and Los Angeles...Earl Freeman, ERB investigator who was in charge of the investigation of the John Birch Society told the press the firm was hired by Raymond V. Long, President of Varec, Inc., a manufacturer of oil company supplies...to make an 'impartial' study of the Birch activities."

"In the process of digging up information via tape recording and microfilming of certain documents, Freeman said, the investigators came across an anti-anti-Communist group headquartered in Orange County with ties to Sacramento and Washington. The secret organization's aim is to discredit the John Birch Society movement and other anti-Communist groups, according to Freeman." ...

"Freeman said his client hasn't cleared the release of names and documents but is expected to do so within 10 days."

Among Freeman's major findings were that:

(1) the JBS was not a secret organization, (2) the majority of JBS members did not support or agree with many of Robert Welch's statements although they agreed with his policies, (3) the JBS was not anti-Semitic or anti-Negro and **"the JBS has Jewish members on the National Advisory Council"** and (4) Investigators found no evidence of violence or unlawful activity by JBS members and (5) investigators did not find any evidence of dictatorship within the JBS and (6) the JBS **"works very hard to make sure that JBS isn't used as a vehicle to promote prejudices"** and when such prejudiced individuals are

discovered, they are isolated or removed. [*Santa Ana Register*, 3/13/62, page 1] [4]

In addition, Freeman contacted William A. Wheeler, the West Coast representative of the House Committee on Un-American Activities on 3/16/62 to inform Wheeler about his “*investigation*”.

Wheeler then notified the FBI office in Los Angeles about what Freeman had told Wheeler, namely, that “**ERB originally began an investigation concerning the John Birch Society in the Orange County area for the purpose of preparing an anti-Birch report, but as investigation progressed, the report turned out to be pro-Birch.**”

Freeman told Wheeler that he “**identified six individuals who attempt to remain secret who were opposed to the Birch Society. The investigators learned that the six individuals had been meeting secretly twice a month for the past 18 months.**” [Los Angeles 100-59001, serial #609; Special Agent memo to SAC-Los Angeles, 3/16/62, page 2].

This 3/16/62 FBI memo also contains some background information regarding Freeman and the owner of ERB (Russell DeOrto).

Freeman: In 1959, Freeman “**was one of the subjects of an Unauthorized Publication or Use of Communications case in Los Angeles, Bufile 139-879, Los Angeles file 139-48.**” At this time, Freeman was a Los Angeles Police Dept officer and he “**admitted the installing of a microphone in Buena Park, California. Prosecution was declined in this case.**” [5]

DeOrto: In 1957, DeOrto “**was one of the subjects in an Impersonation-Conspiracy case, Los Angeles file 47-6998. DeOrto, then a member of the San Bernardino Police Department and a private investigator, was believed by the victim to have represented himself as a U.S. Government Investigator... Prosecution was declined in this matter.**” [Los Angeles 100-59001, serial #609; Special Agent memo to SAC-Los Angeles, 3/16/62, page 4].

Wheeler advised the FBI that another press conference about the Freeman “*investigation*” was scheduled to be held at 8pm on Wednesday, March 21, 1962 in the Embassy Room at the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim. It was expected to be well-attended by news media including by KCOP-TV from Los Angeles. [6]

Supposedly at this 3/21 press conference, the names of the “*Secret Six*” would finally be revealed by Freeman. [FBI-Los Angeles file 100-59001, serial #609, 3/16/62 memo from SAC Los Angeles to Director J. Edgar Hoover and 100-59001, serial #622 regarding Chaffee conversation.]

THE LIES and MISREPRESENTATIONS

Before proceeding further, it would be useful to take a moment to summarize the lies and misrepresentations which have surfaced thus far.

1. On March 9th, Freeman told the FBI-Los Angeles that he was hired by William R. Murphy in January 1962 to conduct an investigation into the JBS because Murphy was interested in joining the JBS. However, on that very same day, Freeman told a reporter for the *Santa Ana Register* about his client that: **it was not an individual and, let's say that our company handles firms as clients."**

2. However, just three days later, on March 12th, Freeman told the *Santa Ana Register* that he was hired by "Raymond V. Long". **What happened to William R. Murphy?** [Note: Freeman didn't even get his alleged new client's name correct. The actual person referenced is **Ramon** V. Long.]

3. Freeman told the *Santa Ana Register* that his alleged JBS investigation **"encompassed a study and analysis of the Birch Society's membership, organizational structure, and financing in the Southern California area."**

4. However, all JBS membership information in 1962 (and subsequently) was then, and always has been, private. No comprehensive member lists (or even chapter names and locations) were made public and JBS chapters often did not even know about the existence of other chapters in their area. At no time during the history of the JBS has it ever published any detailed financial reports about itself -- and the JBS would certainly **not** release such information to some total stranger who claimed to be curious about it. [Note: Even the 1961-1962 California Senate Factfinding Subcommittee on Un-American Activities investigation into the JBS did **not** obtain detailed JBS financial or membership information.]

5. Freeman claimed that Leo J. Corbett declared that he had a list of all JBS members in Orange County. That is preposterous because, in 1962, nobody outside JBS headquarters in Belmont, MA had such information. The JBS has never publicly released its membership lists and there is no conceivable way that a JBS opponent, like Corbett, could have obtained access to such membership information. If Freeman had actually conducted even the most cursory investigation into the JBS, he certainly would have recognized that fact -- even if just from contemporaneous news media reports. Consequently, why would Freeman believe that Corbett was a credible source about anything?

6. Freeman claimed that Corbett contacted him the first week of March 1962 (after Freeman's JBS "*investigation*" had been completed). Just one week later, Freeman told the *Santa Ana*

Register about a “secret group” of six conspirators who planned “to smear anti-Reds” and “discredit Birchers”. One has to ask an obvious question: How was Freeman able to carefully investigate the alleged “Secret Six conspiracy” in just one week? [More details will be presented below to answer that question.]

7. Furthermore, it is noteworthy to point out that Freeman acknowledged that his JBS “investigation” had already been completed before he was contacted by Corbett but Freeman had not discovered anything by the first week of March 1962 about some “Secret Six” group of anti-JBS conspirators.

8. When Freeman contacted the west coast representative of the House Committee on Un-American Activities (William Wheeler), on March 16th, Freeman told Wheeler that his investigation was about the JBS in the Orange County area. Freeman also stated that he originally planned to prepare an “anti-Birch report”. However, Freeman’s original explanation to FBI-Los Angeles was that he was hired by William R. Murphy because Murphy was thinking about joining the JBS. Why, then, would Freeman think he was hired to prepare “an anti-Birch report”??

9. Freeman told the *Santa Ana Register* on March 9th, that his client was “out of Orange County”. However, William Murphy was a resident of Orange County – which is probably why Freeman initially told HUAC rep Wheeler that his investigation was focused upon the “Orange County area”.

10. Freeman told Wheeler that the “Secret Six” group “had been meeting secretly twice a month for the past 18 months.” However, the six men had never previously been at any meeting with each other – much less been together at meetings regularly for “the past 18 months”.

On March 19, 1962 one alleged member of the “Secret Six” (Dixon Gayer) contacted the FBI-Los Angeles office by letter. Mr. Gayer was a well-known Orange County newspaper reporter and columnist along with being a journalism professor at Long Beach State College.

Gayer gave the FBI the same basic information as Walter Chaffee had provided orally that same day. With respect to the “Secret Six” accusations, Gayer wrote: “As one of the above-named individuals I would like to assure you that there is no such group in existence, and that the six men named are not associated in any group of this kind. However, because the charge made by Mr. Freeman and Mr. Long is of grave consequence to the security of the United States of America, and because I am proud to be a loyal citizen of this nation, I feel that even this unfounded charge should be investigated by those authorities who are charged with this responsibility in protecting the security of this nation. I

request that you take immediate steps to investigate the charges of Mr. Freeman and Mr. Long. I assure you I shall answer every question put to me and that I shall cooperate with the FBI fully and enthusiastically in such an investigation.” [Los Angeles file 100-59001, serial #623, 3/19/62 letter from Dixon Gayer to FBI-Los Angeles office.] [7]

On Saturday, March 17th, Dr. William Brashears contacted the Santa Ana FBI office by telephone to report what he claimed was his conversation with Earl Freeman. Brashears was a prominent local JBS member (and Fullerton dentist and real estate developer). Brashears asked if the FBI had given Freeman any information for his “*investigation*” (as Brashears thought Freeman had claimed).

Brashears stated that he did not want to provide details over the phone, so he would come into the Santa Ana FBI office that same day. After he arrived, he told the FBI agents who interviewed him that he first met Freeman through Dr. Jim Garry--another Fullerton dentist and JBS member. [8]

According to Brashears, Earl Freeman had secretly recorded his conversations with Leo Corbett and Brashears listened to some of those tapes. Brashears also stated that his impression was that Freeman employed former FBI and CIA agents who aided his investigation but Brashears was not sure if he heard that directly from Freeman or from Dr. Garry.

The FBI told Brashears that Freeman had no contacts within the FBI nor would Freeman have received any information from the FBI. Brashears agreed to contact Dr. Garry to refresh his memory about what Freeman had actually said. On March 19th, Brashears again contacted the FBI to report that he had discussed these matters with both Earl Freeman and Dr. Garry and Brashears wanted to inform the FBI that his original statements were not accurate. Freeman did not have any connections to the FBI nor did he receive any advice or information from the FBI. [FBI-Los Angeles file 100-59001, serial #629, 3/22/62 and serial #638, 3/29/62.]

THE DISNEYLAND HOTEL PRESS CONFERENCE – Wednesday, March 21, 1962

On Thursday, March 22nd, the *Santa Ana Register* published an article captioned “***Birch Probe Report Branded Extreme***”. This article reported about the press conference on Wednesday evening at Disneyland Hotel.

Earl Freeman was not present at this March 21st press conference. Instead, Freeman’s supposed client (Ramon V. Long) presented brief excerpts from what Freeman claimed he discovered during his “*investigation*”. Long also read excerpts from the JBS *Blue Book*. [9]

Long told the press conference that earlier comments made by Earl Freeman at his March 12th press conference at the ERB office were

not authorized by Long. In particular, Long took exception to Freeman's accusation which referred to "**a far worse menace to the security of our nation**" – i.e. the alleged "Secret Six" conspirators. Long also stated that he planned to turn over all relevant information regarding the "Secret Six" to proper authorities. **However, upon advice of his attorney, Long refused to name the six individuals involved.**

Long confirmed that he was first contacted by Earl Freeman two weeks before the Disneyland Hotel press conference (circa March 7th). At that time, Freeman asked Long if he wanted to sponsor the investigation (which was already completed earlier in March.) Long confirmed that in March he signed a pre-dated contract (dated January 1962).

After Long completed his press conference remarks, the owner of ERB (Russell DeOrto) spoke to the press.

DeOrto declared that he had never authorized release of the Freeman report and he was dissatisfied with what Freeman produced because DeOrto **"didn't believe there was enough in it to substantiate the security menace charge. DeOrto said he didn't know who ordered the investigation at the outset..."**

DeOrto also confirmed that he terminated Freeman. DeOrto declared that **"he will release none of the material in the [Freeman] report because he believes it to be libelous, slanderous, and defamatory"**. Furthermore, DeOrto stated that **"he had not authorized Freeman to turn the contents of the report over to Long for the mass meeting staged Wednesday night."**

According to DeOrto: **"I believe the whole thing was set up by the Birch Society before they ever brought it to me. I think I was used."** [*Santa Ana Register*, 3/22/62; Also see: *Garden Grove Daily News*, on 3/22/62 and 3/25/62]

One more document in the FBI-Los Angeles file deserves to be mentioned. It is a report made by an FBI informant who attended the March 21st Disneyland Hotel press conference. The following additional detail was provided by the informant concerning comments made by Ramon Long and Russell DeOrto during that press conference:

"Mr. Long stated that during the course of the investigation, Matthew Cvetic and Karl Prussion were contacted and interviewed regarding the JBS. They both reported that, in their opinion, the Society was a fine, patriotic organization, comprised of intelligent individuals, and further, the press had been unfair in their attacks on the Society and that he knew personally (Matt Cvetic) that the attacks on the Society were directed from Moscow." **[10]**

Reporters also asked Long if the whole Disneyland Hotel meeting **"was a hoax created by Long for political reasons. They asked if it**

were not a fact that Long was a member of the Young Republicans and that he was running for City Council in the city of Garden Grove. Mr. Long confirmed this but stated this was not the reason for calling the press conference.” Long also confirmed that he had not received his copy of the Freeman report until “**two days ago**” and Freeman had first asked Long if he wanted to sponsor the investigation “**two weeks ago**” which meant that Long “**was not the instigator of the report**”.

DeOrto declared that Freeman’s report failed to substantiate the allegations made against the *Secret Six* and “**DeOrto quarreled with Freeman over the report and, as a result, Freeman was fired and told to take the report with him and not to associate the report with the Efficiency Research Bureau.**” [FBI-Los Angeles file 100-59001, serial #637; 3/21/62 informant report re: Disneyland Hotel press conference on March 21, 1962].

THE LIBEL LAWSUIT

On April 18, 1962, Earl Freeman decided to file a \$1 million libel lawsuit against three members of the so-called “*Secret Six*” because (Freeman claimed) those three individuals (i.e. Walter Chaffee, Dixon Gayer, and Don H. Butka) had sent identical, malicious and defamatory letters to the *Santa Ana Register* and to the *Anaheim Bulletin* which described Freeman’s investigation as “**a hoax**” whose actual purpose was a conspiracy to smear reputable people. Freeman alleged that the letters “**clearly imputed fraudulent motives behind the investigation.**”

Freeman’s lawsuit asked for \$500,000 in actual damages and \$500,000 in punitive damages plus court costs. On April 20th, the *Register* reported that Walter Chaffee would represent the three members of the “*Secret Six*” whom Freeman had sued. Chaffee reiterated that Freeman’s investigation was a hoax. [*Santa Ana Register*, 4/20/62, “*Chaffee Set To Defend*”].

On April 20, 1962, the *Santa Ana Register* published an apology and retraction for their article published on March 22, 1962 which reported their March 20th telephone interview with Walter Chaffee. During that interview, Chaffee discussed the allegations made against the “*Secret Six*” –five of whom he named.

The *Register* apologized for their article because it “**did not accurately report the Chaffee interview. Mr. Chaffee has demanded, and we feel justifiably, that our article be corrected...The Register sincerely apologizes to Mr. Walter Chaffee, Dr. Don H. Butka, Dr. Kurt Burgel, Mr. Dixon Gayer, and Mr. Leo Corbett if the article has caused any of them embarrassment.**”

On August 4th, 1962, the three defendants (Chaffee, Gayer, Butka) asked the presiding Judge for the Freeman libel lawsuit to dismiss it because of acknowledgements made in sworn depositions by Earl Freeman and Ramon Long such as (a) Freeman acknowledged that

his private investigator license had been suspended in 1959 for failure to post bond and (b) Freeman also admitted that his alleged JBS investigation was very cursory [11] and (c) Ramon Long confirmed that he was approached by Freeman in March 1962 and asked to sign a contract pre-dated to January 1962.

Upon advice of his attorney, Freeman dropped his libel lawsuit before it came to trial, because of Freeman's own testimony in his sworn deposition. On February 7, 1963, the *Register* published an article "[*Parties Agree – Drop \\$1 Million Birch Society Libel Suit*](#)". There was no financial settlement and both sides agreed to pay their own court costs.

SUMMARY RE: "SECRET SIX CONSPIRACY"

At no time were any of the *Secret Six* (in 1962 or afterward) instructed to appear to answer questions from the FBI

At no time were any of the *Secret Six* (in 1962 or afterward) instructed to appear before the House Committee on Un-American Activities to respond to questions

At no time were any of the *Secret Six* (in 1962 or afterward) required to testify in a court of law in response to Freeman's libel lawsuit

Despite the fact that Freeman's "investigation" had been exposed as a hoax, JBS member (and southern California Congressman) John Rousselot (who later became Western Regional Director for the JBS and the John Birch Society Public Relations Director) inserted into the *Congressional Record* of June 14, 1962 what was identified as a summary of the 14 "facts" about the JBS which were discovered during the "ERB investigation."

The John Birch Society and the Knott's Berry Farm Freedom Center sold copies of the ERB report which included reprints of the *Santa Ana Register* articles. The pamphlet was entitled "[*What's Wrong With the John Birch Society?*](#)"

Because Russell DeOrto never verified that Freeman was a legitimate licensed private investigator, DeOrto's own private investigator license was suspended for one year and ERB went out of business.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

[1] The criticisms of the JBS which were published in Buckley's magazine, *National Review*, (NR) were not "*launched*" in 1963. The first critical article about Robert Welch's beliefs appeared in the April 11, 1959 issue (page 645) when Eugene Lyons addressed Welch's

absurdities about Boris Pasternak's book, *Dr. Zhivago*.

Subsequently, there were other critical articles about Robert Welch and the JBS published in *NR* prior to 1963 such as "*The Uproar*" published on April 22, 1961 (page 241) and June 3, 1961 (page 342) and December 30, 1961 (page 442) plus a major article entitled "*The Question of Robert Welch*" published in the February 13, 1962 issue (page 83). In addition, prominent conservatives had letters published which agreed with the critical analysis of Welch and the JBS by *NR*. Those letters were published 2/17/62, 2/27/62, and 3/13/62.

[2] The reference to "**Jewish members**" (plural) on the JBS National Council is quite misleading. The only Jewish National Council member during its first years of operation was Alfred Kohlberg but he died on April 7, 1960 – three months after the National Council had its first meeting.

[3] Freeman's "factual" conclusions do not correspond to actual evidence available during the time he conducted his investigation.

[4] While it is accurate to state that the JBS is not entirely a "secret" organization, it certainly was a semi-secret organization. Among the reasons why the JBS was regarded as secretive are the following:

(a) The **very first report received by the FBI** concerning a JBS recruitment meeting (6 weeks after the JBS was founded) made the following observation:

"According to Shinnors [James R. Shinnors, a former FBI Special Agent who attended and then reported upon that meeting to the FBI's Milwaukee field office] **the meeting was conducted by Welch in a very secretive manner. Those in attendance were instructed not to divulge what had transpired to their office personnel or even to their wives at this juncture."** [HQ 62-104401, #6; 1/20/59 SAC Milwaukee to J. Edgar Hoover.]

(b) JBS members usually did not reveal their membership. JBS chapter names and meetings were not made public. The official position of the JBS, as declared by Robert Welch to a meeting of his National Council on April 2, 1960, was that the JBS wished to avoid publicity and **"we should like to have the help of our Council members in keeping general publicity about us to a minimum"**.

(c) Interested parties could not just walk into a JBS chapter meeting; they had to be invited to attend. See for example, "*Birchers Won't Open Meetings*" which appears in 6/19/63 issue of the *Riverside CA Daily Enterprise* newspaper, page B-1 – which quotes the leader of a local JBS chapter (J.W. Longe) declaring that local meetings of the organization are not open to the public because **"there is so much enmity here to us."** The article also quotes a JBS spokesperson and former chapter leader (John C. Pearce) stating that local meetings are **"not open and will not be**

open until we get fair press representation.”

(d) Even the 1963 California Senate Subcommittee Report on the JBS refers on page 39 to a “**secret chapter**” of the JBS “**on the campus of the state university at Santa Barbara**”.

(e) Various controversies erupted around the country which involved JBS members that acted together but they did not reveal their membership.

(f) The inner workings and decision-making process of the Society were rarely publicly revealed. JBS members do not vote to choose or change their leaders nor do they vote to adopt or reject proposed JBS policies or objectives.

(g) There are no notes published about what transpires at JBS chapter meetings or at JBS headquarters despite the fact that the JBS is incorporated as an “*educational organization*”.

(h) There are no detailed financial reports about the JBS which are made public by the JBS. The salaries paid to JBS officials are not released.

(i) The archives of the JBS are not made available to reputable scholars for research purposes.

With respect to Freeman’s conclusion that he found no evidence of “*dictatorship*” within the JBS, it appears that Freeman never even bothered to read the transcript of Welch’s speech at the founding meeting of the JBS – which was published as the *JBS Blue Book*. Welch clearly describes the authoritarian structure of the JBS as follows:

“The John Birch Society is to be a monolithic body. A republican form of government or of organization has many attractions and advantages, under certain favorable conditions. But under less happy circumstances it lends itself too readily to infiltration, distortion and disruption. And democracy, of course, in government or organization, as the Greeks and Romans both found out, and as I believe every man in this room clearly recognizes -- democracy is merely a deceptive phrase, a weapon of demagoguery, and a perennial fraud.” and **“The John Birch Society will operate under completely authoritative control at all levels.”** [*JBS Blue Book*, 5th printing, pages 158-159]

Welch also declared that:

"There are many reasons why, in the fight immediately ahead, we cannot stop for parliamentary procedures or a lot of arguments among ourselves" and "We are not going to have factions developing on the two-sides-to-every-question theme." [*JBS Blue Book*, 5th printing, page 160] AND Welch did not attempt to sugar coat what he thought was needed when he observed that: **"What is not only needed, but is absolutely imperative, is for some hard-boiled,**

dictatorial, and dynamic boss to come along..." and Welch then proposed himself as that "**dictatorial and dynamic boss**". [JBS *Blue Book*, 5th printing, page 117.]

In addition, JBS members have no voice in selection of JBS leaders nor do JBS members decide JBS positions or policies. The JBS National Council and Executive Committee were purely advisory bodies. As the 1963 California Senate Subcommittee report on the JBS pointed out:

"Robert Welch is the undisputed authority in this movement, and from his decisions there can be no appeal. Operating under him is an executive committee and a national council, but these are purely advisory bodies. If Welch makes a decision and both the executive committee and council unanimously, vehemently and implacably disagree, there is no question about who will prevail : Welch. Indeed, since he appoints the members of these bodies, he can fire them individually or collectively at will." [Report of the Senate Factfinding Subcommittee of Un-American Activities, Twelfth Report, *Un-American Activities in California*, 1963, page 18]

[5] Freeman's private investigator license was suspended in 1959. His arrest record includes the following arrests, years, and locations:

1961 = Las Vegas NV

1962 = Montclair CA

1963 = Chico CA

11/30/1964 = Bell CA – At this time he was remanded to San Diego County to serve a 180-day sentence whereupon he left California

[6] 800-1000 persons attended the press conference.

[7] In addition to contacting the FBI by letter prior to the Disneyland Hotel press conference, Dixon Gayer also contacted the House Committee on Un-American Activities to volunteer to appear before HCUA to answer any questions they had. In those contacts, Gayer listed the names of the persons who were widely assumed to be the "Secret Six" conspirators – although their names had not (at that point) been publicly revealed.

[8] Dr. Garry had been sued by Rev. Arthur Harrington of La Habra CA in April 1961 because Garry allegedly had described Rev. Harrington as a Communist. Harrington's attorney for that lawsuit was Walter Chaffee.

[9] Ramon Long was Vice-President of the Garden Grove Young Republicans Club and a candidate for the Garden Grove City Council.

[10] Both Cvetic and Prussion were abruptly terminated as informants by the FBI. Cvetic was a chronic alcoholic who was regarded as unreliable.

Prussion is discussed in the section of my JBS Report which pertains to people whom the Birch Society has described as “experts”. See “Prussion” section here: <https://sites.google.com/site/ernie124102/jbs-3>

With respect to Cvetic’s comment about attacks on the JBS being “**directed from Moscow**” – that is a total falsehood which has always been part of JBS mythology concerning the origins of criticism about the JBS. I address this falsehood at length in my analysis of Cleon Skousen’s pamphlet entitled “**The Communist Attack on the JBS**” which may be seen at the following link: <https://sites.google.com/site/ernie124102/skousen>

[11] Russell DeOrto estimated that Freeman spent only about 20 hours on his “*investigation*”. DeOrto also stated that he never submitted a bill to Ramon Long for the cost of the Freeman “*investigation*” which DeOrto estimated to be \$2500.



 Add files

Comments



Ernie L.

